GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4819
ANSWERED ON:28.04.2008
SOLDIERS ON SIACHEN GLACIER
Nahata Smt. P. Jaya Prada;Singh Shri Uday

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the soldiers deputed on the Siachen Glacier are facing extreme hardships because of the army's repeated failure to provide them with special clothing and the equipment required;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government has taken any special steps to provide special benefits and facilities to soldiers posted at the Siachen Glacier; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY)

(a) & (b): The soldiers posted at Siachen are being provided special clothing and equipment as per authorization. A total of 55 items of Special Clothing, Ski and Mountaineering Equipment are authorized to the troops posted at locations characterized by extreme cold climate conditions, including the Siachen Glacier. The quantities authorized in respect of these items have been increased by the Ministry of Defence in April 2005. After the increase, 27351 sets of equipment, and an equal quantity as reserve for contingencies, are authorized.

(c) & (d): Improvements in special benefits and facilities to soldiers posted at Siachen Glacier is an ongoing process. Armed Forces personnel posted in delineated areas of Siachen as on date receive 'Siachen Allowance' at the rate of Rs.7000 per month for officers and Rs.4667 per month for Personnel Below Officers Rank. The allowance is concurrently available with 'Highly Active Field Area Allowance', the rates of which vary from Rs.1620 per month (For Naik/Sepoy & equivalent) to Rs.4200 per month (For Lt. Col. and above). The personnel posted in Siachen Glacier are also authorized special ration, which meets the higher calorie requirements and facilitates rehydration.